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SENSITIVE
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DEPARTMENT FOR NEA/IPA (BELGRADE), EEB/IFD/ODF
(DEMARCELLUS) AND EUR/AGS

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SUBJECT: PARIS DONORS CONFERENCE: AUSTRIA CONSIDERING
CONTRIBUTION

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¶1. (SBU) During a December 7 conversation with Charge, Ralph Scheide, Head (A/S-equivalent) of the MFA's Middle East and Africa Division, said that Foreign Minister Ursula Plassnik would lead the Austrian delegation to the December 17 donors conference in Paris to support Palestinian reform and capacity building. Scheide added that the GoA was impressed with the level of U.S. commitment (\$555 million) to the process. Austria would consider a meaningful pledge at Paris, according to Scheide.

¶2. (SBU) EconUnit Chief followed up on December 10 with Hannes Hauser, Head of the MFA's Development Cooperation Program and Planning Division. In addition to FM Plassnik, Irene Freudenschuss-Reichl, Director General (USAID Director-equivalent) of the MFA's Development Cooperation Directorate, will also attend the conference. Hauser noted that GoA assistance to the Palestinian Authority (PA), which is one of Austria's 16 target countries, is concentrated in the water and health sectors. However, the GoA, according to Hauser, would consider additional, extraordinary bilateral support to help the PA meet its current obligations.
Kilner